

PATENT APPLICATION

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

In re application of

Docket No: Q63704

FOSTICK, GIDEON, et al.

Appln. No.: 09/848,339

Group Art Unit: 2686

Confirmation No.: 6762

Examiner: Willie J. Daniel, Jr.

Filed: May 04, 2001

For: SMS AUTOMATIC REPLY AND AUTOMATIC HANDLING

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37

MAIL STOP APPEAL BRIEF - PATENTS

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 41.37, Appellant submits the following:

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I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is COMVERSE NETWORK SYSTEMS, LTD., by virtue of an assignment executed by Gidean Fostick and Tugal Fej Shmuelelevitz (hereinafter "Appellant") on June 10, 2001 and recorded in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on July 10, 2001 at reel 011962 and frame 0623.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Upon information and belief, there are no other prior or pending appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings known to Appellant's Representative or the Assignee that may be related to, be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the Appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-19 are cancelled.

Claims 20-49 are pending and are the basis of this Appeal (*see* Claims Appendix).

Claims 20-49 stand rejected.

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IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

Appellant submitted amendments to claim 21 after the final rejection on November 12, 2004, and these amendments were entered by the Examiner as indicated in the Advisory Action mailed December 16, 2004.

V. SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

The present invention is directed to a method/system for managing Short Message Service (SMS) messages. Specifically, the invention is directed to allowing a recipient of SMS messages to set-up one or more alternative handling instructions for handling the received SMS messages.

Independent claims 20 and 35

Claims 20 and 35 are the independent claims in this application. Each of claims 20 and 35 recites a method/system for identifying an SMS message for a message receiver, determining whether the message receiver has set up an alternative handling instruction for handling SMS messages, and if such an alternative handling instruction has been set up, then executing the alternative handling instruction. As shown in Fig. 1, a Message Sender 10 sends an SMS message from a sending device to a Message Recipient (MR) 12, who receives the SMS message on a receiving device. (page 9, lines 1-3). An MR 12 sets up, for example, Automatic Handling Instructions (AHI) on an SMS Automatic Handling Server (SAHS) 16. The SMS sending and replying processes are managed by an SMS Center (SMSC) 14. An SMSC 14 processes each message and queries whether an AHI is set up for the receiver. If so, then the AHI is carried out. (page 9, lines 6-9 and 19-22; see also the flow chart in Fig. 2).

Independent claims 20 and 35 also recite that the set up handling instruction includes a saving instruction for saving SMS messages in a personalized folder for the message receiver. Consequently, according to these claims, the recipient is able to set up a handling instruction

which allows received messages to be saved in a personalized folder for the message receiver.
(page 13, lines 8-9).

Claims 28 and 43

Each of claims 28 and 43 recites the feature in which a “content” of an SMS message is used to select the appropriate alternative handling instruction (AHI) from several AHIs. (page 11, lines 14-18).

Claims 34 and 49

Claims 34 and 49 each recite the feature in which an appropriate AuotReply Message is selected in accordance with whether the SMS message is either a Mobile-Originated SMS message or a machine originated SMS message. (page 14, lines 1-4).

Claims 23 and 38

Claims 23 and 38 recite the feature wherein the AHI is a filtering instruction, and the filtering instruction rejects SMS messages that are older than a predetermined amount of time. (page 13, lines 10-11).

Claims 26, 27, 41 and 42

Claims 26 and 41 recite the feature of a deletion instruction for deleting undelivered SMS messages. Claims 27 and 42 depend on claims 26 and 41, respectively, and further recite the

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feature of the undelivered SMS messages are deleted after a predetermined amount of time.

(Page 13, lines 3-13).

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

- A.** Claims 20-21, 25, 28-29, 31, 33-36, 43-44, and 46-49 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Takala (WO 99/53699).
- B.** Claims 22-23, 26-27, 37-38 and 41-42 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as being obvious over Takala in view of Alperovich et al.
- C.** Claims 24 and 29 were rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Takala in view of Patil.
- D.** Claims 30, 32 and 45 were rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious from Takala in view of Lohtia et al.
- E.** Claims 27 and 42 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph.

VII. ARGUMENT

A. Rejection of claims 20-21, 25, 28-29, 31, 33-36, 43-44 and 46-49 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Takala(WO 99/53699).

Claims 20 and 35

Claims 20 and 35 are the independent claims in this application. Each of claims 20 and 35 recites a method/system for identifying an SMS message for a message receiver, determining whether the message receiver has set up an alternative handling instruction for handling SMS messages, and if such an alternative handling instruction has been set up, then executing the alternative handling instruction. Independent claims 20 and 35 also recite that the set up handling instruction includes a saving instruction for saving SMS messages in a personalized folder for the message receiver.

As set forth on page 4 of the final Office Action mailed June 4, 2004, it is the Examiner's position that Takala teaches a handling instruction including a saving instruction for saving SMS messages in an electronic calendar. Specifically, the Office Action cites to page 6, lines 12-36 and page 7, 14-36 of Takala for this alleged teaching. Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner has misread the teachings of Takala as there is no teaching in Takala of the claimed handling instruction for saving SMS messages in a personalized folder for a message receiver. As such, Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner has failed to set forth a *prima facie* case of anticipation.

As described on page 6 and shown in Fig. 1, the Takala system includes a network 1 including a mobile services switching center MSC, a short-message service center SMSC and an

electronic mail service base 6. Regarding storing SMS messages, Takala teaches that “the short-message service center SMSC for the reception, delivery and storage of short messages”. Takala also teaches storing electronic mail messages, as opposed to SMS messages. Page 6, lines 12-16. Thus, Takala teaches that the short-message service center SMSC stores SMS messages. This appears to be no different from the SMSC 14 described in the present application, which also stored SMS messages in order to query and process same. As shown in Fig. 1 and the flow chart of Fig. 2 of the present application, the SMSC 14 intercepts the SMS message in order to query and process the SMS message. In this case, all received SMS messages are stored for processing purposes. In marked contrast to the SMSC described in Takala and in the present application, independent claims 20 and 35 each recites a handling instruction for storing SMS messages for a message receiver, and further recites that the handling instruction stores the SMS messages in a personalized folder. Although the SMSC in Takala receives and stores SMS messages (as does the SMSC 14 shown in Fig. 1 of the subject application), there is no teaching in Takala of whether the message receiver has set up an alternative handling instruction for storing SMS message for a message receiver even generally, let alone a handling instruction for storing SMS messages in a personalized folder for the message receiver, as also recited in independent claims 20 and 35. Takala also teaches an answering system 2, which includes means 8 and 11 for generating and transmitting from the B-subscriber’s calendar data base 3 an automatic response to a short message or electronic mail message. Page 6, lines 16-20.

As noted in the Office Action, Takala also teaches a calendar database 3 containing information about the subscriber B (i.e., the receiving party). Specifically, Takala teaches an

answering server 2 that identifies the B-subscriber from the user database 5 and then uses the information stored in the B-subscriber's calendar database 3 to "generate" a short message response to the A-subscriber (i.e., the sending party). The information in the calendar database 4 is sorted into different fields, each containing different information about the B-subscriber regarding his/her schedule, appointments, substitutes, etc... Page 7, lines 24-36. Thus, Takala teaches using information in the subscriber's calendar data base in order to "generate" an SMS message. See, page 7, line 28. However, independent claims 20 and 35 each recites a handling instruction for storing an SMS message for a message receiver in a personalized folder, not generating a new SMS message as taught by Takala. There is simply no teaching in the calendar database or anywhere else in Takala of a handling instruction set up by the message receiver for storing SMS messages in a personalized folder for a message receiver.

As is apparent, independent claims 20 and 35 recite features not taught in Takala. Specifically, there is no teaching in Takala or any other cited reference of an alternative handling instruction for storing SMS messages in a personalized folder for a message receiver. For this reason, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 20 and 35 define patentable subject matter.

Claims 25 and 40

Claim 25 is dependent on claim 20 and recites the further feature wherein the personalized folder is a folder identified for saving urgent SMS messages. Claim 40 depends from independent claim 35 and similarly recites the feature wherein the personalized folder is a folder identified for saving urgent SMS messages.

Regarding these claims, the final Office Action mailed June 4, 2004, states as follows:

Regarding **Claim 25**, Takala discloses the method of claim 20, wherein the personalized folder (4) is a folder identified for saving urgent SMS message (see pg. 6, lines 10-27; pg. 7, lines 29 - pg 8, line 9), where the system has a SMSC for storage of messages which communicates with the user's calendar database (3) and electronic calendar (4). The saving of message would be obvious for urgent or essential messages. (6-4-04 Office Action, at p. 5)

Regarding dependent claim 40, the June 4, 2004 Office Action indicates that this claim is rejected for the same reasons set forth in connection with claim 25. (6-4-04 Office Action, at p. 7).

As an initial matter, it is noted that the Examiner indicates that the feature of claim 25 (and 40) would have been "obvious" from the teachings of Takala. (see page 5 of the June 4, 2004 Office Action). However, both claims 25 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. It is improper for the Examiner to employ an obviousness standard when rejecting claims under Section 102. In order to reject properly a claim under Section 102, each and every claim feature must be present in the cited reference. *Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genetech, Inc.*, 927 F.2d 1565 (Fed. Cir. 1991)(Anticipation requires that all elements and limitations of the claim are found within a single prior art reference. There must be no difference between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure); see also, *Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co. v. Johnson & Johnson Orthopedics, Inc.*, 976 F.2d 1559 (Fed. Cir. 1992). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection of claims 25 and 40 is improper, as a matter of law.

Moreover, there is no teaching or suggestion in Takala of a personalized folder identified for saving urgent SMS message. In this regard, the Examiner points to page 6, lines 10-27 and

page 7, line 29 through page 8, line 9 of Takala for allegedly teaching the specific personalized folder in claims 25 and 40. (see 6-4-04 Office Action at pp. 5 and 7). However, a review of these cited portions of Takala reveals that there is absolutely no teaching (or suggestion) in Takala of the personalized folder defined in claims 35 and 40.

In particular, the Examiner cites to page 7, line 29 through page 8, line 9 in rejecting claims 25 and 40. This portion of Takala does describe an “urgent business matter” situation; however, it fails to describe saving urgent SMS messages in a personalized folder identified as such. Rather, Takala teaches the situation in which the B-subscriber (the called party) has set up an automatic SMS message response for certain predetermined calling numbers (i.e., A-subscribers). For these calling numbers the automatic SMS will state as follows: “I am in London. In urgent business matters, contact me at number 2345”. Takala goes on to indicate that for other calling numbers (i.e., other A-subscribers), the following automatic SMS message is provided: “I am at a conference. Contact me again tomorrow”.

Thus, Takala teaches simply that different automatic SMS messages can be set by the B-subscriber depending on the particular A-subscriber’s number. There is absolutely no teaching (or even remote suggestion) in Takala of a personalized folder saving urgent SMS messages. In Takala, the automatic reply message indicates a number for urgent business matters. This is quite different from the claimed invention of saving messages in a personalized folder marked for urgent messages. Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner erred in rejecting claims 25 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 in view of the teachings of Takala.

Claims 28 and 43

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner also erred in rejecting claims 28 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 based on the teachings of Takala.

Each of claims 28 and 43 recites the feature in which a “content” of an SMS message is used to select the appropriate alternative handling instruction (AHI) from several AHIs. The Examiner indicates that this claimed feature is taught in Takala, which allows the B-subscriber to enter definitions in the answering server 2 specifying which A-subscriber “identifiers” are to be answered with information from which fields in the calendar database 3. See page, 7, line 29-37 of Takala, and page 5 and 7 of the June 4, 2004 Office Action. Thus, in Takala, the B-subscriber can set a particular response based for example on the A-subscribers number (such as the example indicated above). However, claims 28 and 43 recite using the “content” of the SMS message, not the identity of the individual sending the SMS message. The “content” of the SMS message, as recited in claim 28 and 43, clearly refers to a portion of the message written by the individual, not the identity of the individual.

Consequently, Takala clearly does not teach each and every feature recited in claims 28 and 43, and therefore would not have anticipated these claims.

Claims 34 and 49

Claims 34 and 49 each recites the feature in which an appropriate AuotReply Message is selected in accordance with whether the SMS message is either a Mobile-Originated SMS

message or a machine originated SMS message. Appellant respectfully submits that Takala fails to disclose this claimed feature. In rejecting these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the Examiner cites to page 6, lines 16-21 and 29-33, and page 7, lines 3-36 of Takala as allegedly disclosing this claimed feature. However, these cited portions of Takala simply indicate that the B-subscriber can set a particular response based on the A-subscriber's number (such as the example indicated above). There is no disclosure, even generally in Takala about Mobile-Originated SMS messages and machine originated SMS messages. In contrast, claims 34 and 49 require distinguishing between these two types of messages, and selecting an appropriate response based on the particular type of SMS message (i.e., Mobile-Originated or machine originated). As is apparent, Takala does not teach each and every feature recited in claims 34 and 49, and therefore could not have anticipated these claims.

B. Rejection of claims 22-23, 26-27, 37-38 and 41-42 under 35 USC §103 as being obvious over Takala in view of Alperovich et al.

Claims 23 and 38

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner erred in rejecting claims 23 and 38 based on the combined teachings of Takala and Alperovich et al. Specifically, Appellant respectfully submits that neither Takala nor Alperovich et al teaches or suggests the feature in claims 23 and 38, and therefore even if it would have been obvious to combine these two references, such a combination would not have rendered these claims obvious.

Claims 23 and 38 recite the feature wherein the AHI is a filtering instruction, and the filtering instruction rejects SMS messages that are older than a predetermined amount of time. The Examiner acknowledges that Takala fails to teach this claimed filtering instruction. However, the Examiner states that Alperovich et al teaches this filtering instruction, and further, that it would have been obvious to combine Alperovich et al with Takala to achieve the claimed invention. The Examiner errs because Alperovich et al fails to teach or suggest the claimed filtering instruction.

Alperovich et al teaches a system for selectively accepting SMS messages. The Examiner cites to column 4, line 57 to column 5, line 3 and Figs. 3-5 of Alperovich for allegedly teaching the specific filtering instruction defined in claims 23 and 38. However, Alperovich teaches that when the mobile station MS 22 is turned off or out of range, message 100 remains buffered for later delivery. Alperovich et al then states simply “If the buffered SMS message 100 cannot be deliver after a predetermined delivery-delay period, then.” Col. 4, lines 59-62. Apparently, some portion of the sentence in Alperovich et al is missing from the issued patent, but assuming the sentence ended by saying “then the SMS message is not sent to the MS 22”, this still does not provide the feature recited in claims 23 and 38. According to these claims, the message receiver is able to select the alternative handling instruction. In Alperovich et al, there is no teaching or suggestion that the message receiver is able to set up a handling instruction to determine whether or not to deliver messages 100. Rather, it appears that this buffering of the SMS message always occurs; that is, the message receiver has no control over whether or not the message is delivered, let alone such control based on whether the SMS message is older than a

predetermined amount of time. Therefore, even assuming, *arguendo*, that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Takala and Alperovich et al, such a combination would not have rendered claims 23 and 38 obvious because neither Takala nor Alperovich et al teaches the specific filtering instruction recited in these claims.

Claims 26, 27, 41 and 42

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner erred in rejecting claims 26, 27, 41 and 42 based on the combined teachings of Takala and Alperovich et al.

Claims 26 and 41 recite the feature of a deletion instruction for deleting undelivered SMS messages. Claims 27 and 42 depend on claims 26 and 41, respectively, and further recite the feature that undelivered SMS messages are deleted after a predetermined amount of time. It is respectfully submitted that neither Takala nor Alperovich et al teaches these claimed features, and therefore the combination of these references likewise fails to teach these features.

The Examiner acknowledges that Takala fails to teach the deletion instructions recited in claims 26, 27, 41 and 42. See pages 9-11 of the June 4, 2004 Office Action.

As indicated above, Alperovich et al teaches buffering for later delivery SMS messages 100 if the MS 22 is unavailable or out of range. There is a portion of Alperovich et al is missing, but even assuming Alperovich et al teaches not delivering the message 100 after a predetermined amount of delay time, such teaching does not correspond to the claimed deletion instruction recited in claims 26, 27, 41 and 42. In Alperovich et al, there is no teaching or suggestion that the message receiver is able to set up a handling instruction to determine whether or not to delete undelivered messages, let alone to delete undelivered messages after a predetermined amount of

time. Rather, it appears that the buffering (and possible deletion) of the SMS message in Alperovich et al always occurs; that is, the message receiver has no control over whether or not to delete the messages.

Moreover, the message 100 in Alperovich et al corresponds to a message that is being received by the MS 100. In contrast, the undelivered message in claims 26, 27, 41 and 42 refers to messages that are kept in the hand-set, such as draft messages that have not yet been sent, or expired (time-limited) messages that are no longer relevant to send (see page 6 of the present application, which clearly defines “undelivered messages”).

Consequently, even assuming it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Takala and Alperovich et al, there is not teaching of the message receiver setting up an instruction for allowing undelivered messages (i.e., messages from the message receiver) to be deleted, or deleted after a predetermined amount of time.

C. Rejection of claims 24 and 29 under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Takala in view of Patil.

Claims 24 and 29 are patentable at least because of the patentability of claim 21, on which claim 24 depends, and claim 20, on which claim 29 depends.

D. Rejection of claims 30, 32 and 45 were rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious from Takala in view of Lohtia et al.

Claims 30, 32 and 45 are patentable at least because of the patentability of independent claim 20, on which claims 30 and 32 depend, or claim 35, on which claim 35 depends.

E. Rejection of Claims 27 and 42 under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph.

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As an initial matter, it is not clear whether or not the Examiner has withdrawn the rejection of claims 27 and 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. In the Amendment after final rejection filed November 12, 2004, Appellant pointed out the support in the originally-filed specification for claims 27 and 42. In response to this Amendment, the Examiner issued an Advisory Action on December 16, 2004; however, that Advisory Action gave no indication as to the status of the 112, first paragraph rejection. Therefore, in the even that the Examiner has maintained the 112, first paragraph rejection, Appellant submits the following reasons as to why that rejection is improper.

The reason for the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph rejection is set forth on page 3 of final Office Action. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that “wherein undelivered SMS messages are deleted after expiration of a predetermined amount of time” is not supported by the specification. However, page 6 of the specification clearly supports the subject matter recited in claims 27 and 42. Specifically, page 6 of the specification teaches that “Other automatic-handling features include: Automatic SMS forwarding, and pre-configured automatic deletion of undelivered messages. Undelivered messages refer to messages that are kept in the hand-set, such as draft messages that have not yet been sent, or expired (time-limited) messages that are no longer relevant to send.” Emphasis added. Consequently, the specification does adequately support the claimed subject matter of deleting undelivered SMS message after a predetermined expired time.

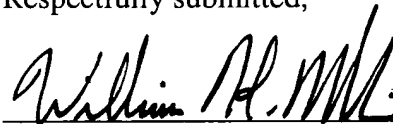
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In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 27 and 42 are adequately supported by the original specification. Therefore, the Board is respectfully requested to withdraw this 112, first paragraph rejection.

Unless a check is submitted herewith for the fee required under 37 C.F.R. §41.37(a) and 1.17(c), please charge said fee to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: December 23, 2005

CLAIMS APPENDIX

CLAIMS 20-49 ON APPEAL:

20. A method of managing SMS messages, comprising:

identifying an SMS message for a message receiver;

determining whether the message receiver has set up at least one alternative handling instruction for SMS messages; and

if it is determined that the message receiver has set up an alternative handling instruction for SMS messages, then executing the alternative handling instruction, wherein the set up at least one alternative handling instruction includes a saving instruction for saving SMS messages in a personalized folder for the message receiver.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction additionally includes at least one of: a filtering instruction for filtering SMS messages identified for the message receiver according to a predetermined criteria; a forwarding instruction for forwarding an SMS message received by the message receiver to at least one additional address; and a deletion instruction for deleting SMS messages according to a predetermined criteria.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a filtering instruction specifying a predetermined criteria by which SMS messages are to be rejected by the message receiver.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said filtering instruction rejects SMS messages that are older than a predetermined amount of time.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a forwarding instruction for forwarding a received SMS message to a plurality of different addresses.

25. The method of claim 20, wherein the personalized folder is a folder identified for saving urgent SMS messages.

26. The method of claim 21, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a deletion instruction for deleting undelivered SMS messages.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein undelivered SMS messages are deleted after expiration of a predetermined amount of time.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein there are a plurality of alternative handling instructions set up for the message receiver, and wherein a content of the SMS message is used to select the appropriate alternative handling instruction from the plurality of alternative handling instructions.

29. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction is set up via a form on a Web-based provisioning interface.

30. The method of claim 20, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction is set up via an SMS message.

31. The method of claim 20, further comprising determining whether the message receiver has set up at least one AutoReply Message for the message receiver.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein there are a plurality of AutoReply Messages set up for the message receiver, and wherein the SMS message is used as a key to select an appropriate AutoReply Message.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein a content of the SMS message is used as the key to select the appropriate AutoReply Message from the plurality of AutoReply Messages.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the appropriate AutoReply Message is selected in accordance with whether the SMS message is one of a Mobile-Originated SMS message and a machine originated SMS message.

35. A system for managing SMS messages, comprising:
a module for identifying an SMS message for a message receiver; and
a module for determining whether the message receiver has set up at least one alternative handling instruction for SMS messages; and if it is determined that the message receiver has set up an alternative handling instruction for SMS messages, then executing the alternative handling instruction, wherein the set up at least one alternative handling instruction includes a saving instruction for saving SMS messages in a personalized folder for the message receiver.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction additionally includes at least one of: a filtering instruction for filtering SMS messages identified for the message receiver according to a predetermined criteria; a forwarding instruction for forwarding an SMS message received by the message receiver to at least one additional address; and a deletion instruction for deleting SMS messages according to a predetermined criteria.

37. The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a filtering instruction specifying a predetermined criteria by which SMS messages are to be rejected by the message receiver.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein said filtering instruction rejects SMS messages that are older than a predetermined amount of time.

39. The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a forwarding instruction for forwarding a received SMS message to a plurality of different addresses.

40. The system of claim 35, wherein the personalized folder is a folder identified for saving urgent SMS messages.

41. The system of claim 36, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction includes a deletion instruction for deleting undelivered SMS messages.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein undelivered SMS messages are deleted after expiration of a predetermined amount of time.

43. The system of claim 36, wherein there are a plurality of alternative handling instructions set up for the message receiver, and wherein a content of the SMS message is used to select the appropriate alternative handling instruction from the plurality of alternative handling instructions.

44. The system of claim 35, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction is set up via a form on a Web-based provisioning interface.

45. The system of claim 35, wherein the at least one alternative handling instruction is set up via an SMS message transmitted from a mobile communication device.

46. The system of claim 35, further comprising a module for determining whether the message receiver has set up at least one AutoReply Message for the message receiver.

47. The system of claim 46, wherein there are a plurality of AutoReply Messages set up for the message receiver, and wherein the SMS message is used as a key to select an appropriate AutoReply Message from the plurality of AutoReply Messages.

48. The system of claim 47, wherein a content of the SMS message is used as the key to select the appropriate AutoReply Message from the plurality of AutoReply Messages.

49. The system of claim 47, wherein the appropriate AutoReply Message is selected in accordance with whether the SMS message is one of a Mobile-Originated SMS message and a machine originated SMS message.